

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3052

Title: Extension of Information Services Contract

Executive summary:

This paper seeks the Mayor's approval for the Greater London Authority (GLA) to exercise an option for a two-year extension (to March 2025) to the current contract providing information services to the GLA and the London Fire Commissioner (LFC). The LFC manages this contract on behalf of the GLA under a shared-service arrangement, approved in Mayoral Decision (MD) 2294.

The current contract expires in March 2023 but has the option for a two-year extension. Following discussion with the LFC, it is agreed that an extension to the current contract would be the best approach to allow time for hybrid working to embed further; and to determine whether this has any impact on the services provided under the contract.

The shared-service agreement between the GLA and the LFC has no end date, so does not need to be renewed; but it can be terminated with six months' notice on either side. LFC officers are also concurrently securing governance approval to support the contract extension.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves the GLA's expenditure on a continued shared-service arrangement, with the London Fire Commissioner (LFC), for the provision of information services. The existing service contract for the provision of information services to the GLA and the LFC, which the LFC manages on behalf of the GLA, will be extended for two years, with an anticipated cost to the GLA of £235,752 over the extension period (2023-24 and 2024-25) (£117,876 pa).

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

15/2/23

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In 2018, the GLA agreed to a shared-service arrangement, whereby the LFC would procure and manage a contract for an information service, due to their greater understanding of these services. This agreement would benefit both organisations due to the sharing of resources between both organisations. The Mayor approved the arrangement on 13 July 2018 in MD2294; the LFC also approved the procurement action, and agreed to finalise and execute a shared-service agreement with the GLA under section 401A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. In February 2019, the successful tender for the provision of a shared information service from the supplier – Idox Software Ltd (Idox) – was accepted.
- 1.2 The original contract was for four years. Governance approvals (GLA and LFC) only secured approvals for funding for four years; MD2294 noted the option for an extension of two further years allowed by the contract.
- 1.3 The information services provided by Idox Ltd are currently available to all members of GLA staff. Contracted services include the following:
- provision of an enquiry service (covering a range of activities from profiling to literature searching)
 - access to full textbooks, journals and newspapers
 - training to strengthen information literacy
 - production of fortnightly alerting bulletins, highlighting new policy announcements, reports, official statistics, publications and research articles across a range of policy subject areas
 - supply of a weekly information bulletin covering all policy areas relevant to the GLA
 - access to social/urban affairs databases to enable GLA users to carry out their own searches for research articles.
- 1.4 In 2021, GLA and LFC officers reviewed the contract and identified areas for savings. Contract negotiations were undertaken in March 2021, and services and charges agreed for the final two years of the contract, which provided savings of approximately £10,000 per year. Contract management information demonstrates that the services provided are well used.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The primary objective is for the LFC to: continue to lead on the contracting of information services for itself and the GLA; extend the benefits of the service to itself and the GLA; and maintain efficiencies in the use of resources and physical space required to deliver services.
- 2.2 LFC officers are in agreement that this extension should be effected and are securing approval of the extension and expenditure necessary through their own decision process.

- 2.3 The service is reviewed on a quarterly basis with members of the LFC, the GLA and Idox attending. Updates are provided on usage, communications and finance.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The proposals in this paper will not have a negative impact on any groups identified under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 The GLA information service supports awareness of the latest research and evidence on equalities to inform decision-making by staff; and produces a fortnightly specialist bulletin on equality and diversity. The Ask a Researcher service also supports staff to find specific equalities information for their projects.
- 3.3 The service supports initiatives on workplace mental health and workplace equalities training with resource lists.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1 A lack of an extension to the contract will leave the GLA without a data service provider significantly hampering the ability of officers to undertake research and form policies. A further financial risk would also arise if a new contract had to be negotiated due to the current high inflationary environment.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.2 There are no known conflicts of interest to declare for those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 This paper relates to the exercise of an option for a two-year extension of a contract, to continue a shared-service agreement with the LFC for the provision of the GLA's information services as approved in MD2294.
- 5.2 Approval is sought for expenditure of up to £235,752 over 2023-24 and 2024-25 (£117,876 per annum). This will be funded from the Information Services budget. The cost has increased from £110,475 in previous years due to inflation; this still provides a value for money service for the GLA. The intention is to retender the service, with a start date following the two-year extension.
- 5.3 Future years' budgets are indicative and subject to the GLA's annual budget-setting process. To mitigate any risk of the budget not being approved for future years to cover costs following the budget-setting process, the contract should include the usual break clauses that could potentially be exercised if required.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further, or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
 - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
 - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty – namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 LFC has confirmed to the GLA that it is their assessment the proposed extension to the contract with Idox is permitted under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, taking into account an assessment of the original procurement documents and the existing contract.
- 6.4 The existing MD2294 delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources to prepare, finalise and subsequently execute, on behalf of the GLA, documentation putting into place the arrangements under section 401A, which would include the variation required to extend the existing contract with Idox.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Mayor's approval for extending the shared services with Idox	February 2023
Contract extension awarded	April 2023
Extension of contract starts/extension of shared-service agreement	April 2023

Appendices and supporting papers:
None.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? No

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Gordon Douglass has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Niran Mothada has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

David Bellamy has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 13 February 2023.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:

D. Gene

Date:

15/02/2023

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor.

Signature:

D. Bellamy

Date:

13/02/2023

